

# SEMINAR ON EUROPEAN PROJECTS:

The evaluation process FP7: REGPOT  
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# **Two parts in my presentation**

**1.- REGPOT overview (quick tour): 3-19**

**2.- Presentation of specific cases (slower presentation): 20-26**

# Part 1: 3-19

## REGIONAL ACTIONS IN FP7

**Within the Framework Programme number 7 two actions, at regional level, were included:**

### **1.- Research Potential - REGPOT**

– Budget: 340 Mio€, during all FP7

### **2.- Regions of Knowledge**

– Budget: 126 Mio€, during all FP7

# Aim of REGPOT: had two orientations

## 1. For the beneficiary:

- a) Upgrade RTD capacity & capability (in terms of human resources, in scientific equipment and in research management)
- b) Contribute to increase S&T excellence and visibility
- c) For the integration in European Research Networks & in ERA
- d) Improvement of the participation in FP7 projects

## 2. For the proper EU:

- a) Contribution to the regional RTD capacity building
- b) Foster the regional and the European sustainable socioeconomic development

# SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF REGPOT

1. To unlock the Research Potential of the European Union by integrating the excellent research entities established in the EU's convergence regions and EU periphery regions into the ERA (Canary islands, Martinique, Guadalupe, Reunion or Azores...)
2. To increase the capacities of selected research organisations to successfully participate in European research activities & in the EU Research Framework Programmes (FP7 and H2020)
3. To reinforce cooperation with at least 3 European outstanding research “partners organisations” (in the same S&T domain or in a complementary field) established in 3 different Member States

# IMPLEMENTATION

- Increase the potential of a research center:
  - Acquisition and development of equipment
  - Recruitment of high level researchers
  - Exchanges between partners (secondments)
  - Events to transfer knowledge (workshops etc.)
  - Structures for evaluation of excellence
- Take advantage of the knowledge and experience of other high level centers on the use of research as driving force for socioeconomic development

# EXPECTED RESULTS

1. Exchange of know-how and experience through trans-national two-way secondments of research staff between the beneficiary and the 'partnering organizations'
2. Recruitment of high level researchers
3. Upgrade "sophisticate" research equipment
4. Organization of workshops and conferences – dissemination and promotional activities – publications for knowledge sharing and better visibility

# REGPOT

RegPot was implemented by means of accompanying measures. Applicants had to submit their excellence in the area(s) of their competence and also their weaknesses (by means of a SWOT analysis, included in the proposal)

An Action Plan was required for each proposal



# REGPOT REQUISITES

1. Employment of experienced researchers in areas that were necessary to develop more
2. To laboratory techniques, training in specific plans or in technologies advanced
3. Exchanges of local staff with other excellent institutions based in Europe (developed regions)
4. Purchase (or replacement) of equipment RTD
5. Participation in international conferences and the organization of scientific libraries (including virtual libraries)

# REGPOT

It was important that the proponents have a development strategy that goes beyond the Commission funding

The funding could be up to 100 % of additional costs (additional to the regular functioning of the institutions) with maximum € 5 million per proposal. In general, the retained proposals for funding received between 3,5 and 4,5 MioEUR, in order to produce a high impact in the selected region

# REGPOT

The total amount of the program during the period of FP7 was € 360 million. Almost nothing when you consider the size of the eligible countries and regions with low development and expressed needs

Generally, each call were funded between 15 and 20 projects(+/- 8% was the rate of success)

# FINAL EVALUATION OF REGPOT (I)

Done by COWI-Denmark (COWI is a Danish international consulting group)

- **Conclusion:**

Successful programme, but there are some risks regarding the sustainability of the REGPOT achievement

- **Relevance:**

- Strong indications that REGPOT addressed needs of research actors in convergence and Outermost regions
- High number of applicants (+/- 200-250 proposals in each call, but only 8% of proposals were included in the retained list: in general not all proposals with a score of 14,5/15 points were selected, this point was a significant problem)
- Low number of non-eligible proposals
- Support of regional strengths (but some projects focused on national or global issues, for example in envi./global change)

# FINAL EVALUATION OF REGPOT (II)

## Efficiency

1. Efficient in helping to fill a funding gap among regional, national and international funding sources
2. Desired effects were achieved at a reasonable cost
3. Research capacities have been improved considerably through REGPOT funding
4. Researchers profited from funding conference participation and networking

# FINAL EVALUATION OF REGPOT (III)

## Effectivity

1. REGPOT supported projects have to a large extent achieved their intended results
2. Difficult to assess whether supported institutions have become equal level players in ERA
3. REGPOT has helped reducing Brain Drain
4. Many project participants have improved publication records
5. Research actors have established links to Smart Specialization strategies

# FINAL EVALUATION OF REGPOT (IV)

## Impact and Sustainability

1. Risk of sustainability
  - *Several actors seem to have difficulties to find sufficient funding to maintain research capacities*
2. Several projects achieved sustainability through incorporation of research results in commercial products (patents)
3. Synergies Expert Group (2011) advised higher budgets with links to other EU policies (e.g. the regional policies)

# FINAL EVALUATION OF REGPOT (V)

## **Recommendations / Lessons Learnt**

1. More clarity on definition of regional center of excellence
2. Future actions should focus on where financial barriers are highest and where the research potentials may be the highest
3. Allow some flexibility in application of the funding
4. Focus on sustainability in future projects



# CONCLUSIONS FOR AN EVALUATOR

- REGPOT was a flexible programme
- Short period between the dead line of the call and the signature of the contract (in general 7 months)
- Open to any specific scientific area: Material Sciences Socioeconomic Sc., Environment, Chemistry, Physics, Earth Sc., Agriculture, Medicine...)
- Bottom-up approach
- Proposals with inter/multidisciplinary dimension have been accepted (excellence and credibility was the main criteria, in order to include one proposal in the main list)

# CONCLUSIONS FOR AN EVALUATOR

It was simple in design and proposals were not difficult to conceive.

Important to note that the proposals could not be prepared by consultants poorly mastered the scientific and technological aspects of the proposed strategy

# OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

**One drawback:** its budget was very low compared with demand

REGPOT tried by all means to increase the budget: there were no more funds (360 MIOEUR)

Indeed , countries (rich) North of Europe did not appreciate that a program is not addressed to them. They did not see the benefits they could gain in the medium-long term

Their speeches were that this type of activity should have been implemented in the work of the budgets of regional policy

# CASE STUDIES: Part 2

## **SOME EXAMPLES OF REGPOT:**

1. In Crete, an astrophysics laboratory
2. Democritus (GR): environmental project
3. In Reunion (F): laboratory of Marine Sciences
4. The Faculty of Medicine at Bari (Italy) etc.

Two specific Case studies (which are of public domain):

- Case study 1: BIODESERT (Tunisia)
- Case study 2: RECENT (Poland)

# REGPOT CASE 1: Biodesert 2010-2012 January

The first case study is a good example of how REGPOT contributed to targeted Convergence regions – **Southern EU and Northern Africa**. Research theme: **Agriculture Project**. The overall objective of BIODESERT was to provide support to the Tunisian partner (University of Tunis “El Manar”) for **developing high-quality research potential in arid environments (Ecology)**

## **Specific objectives were:**

1. **Acquire new advanced research equipment** to the Tunisian partner
2. **Transfer knowledge** through the recruitment by the Tunisian partner of experienced researchers in the area of molecular biology and molecular microbial ecology.
3. **Networking** with experienced research teams in the same research areas for enhancing the Tunisia partner knowhow.
4. **Disseminating knowledge** at regional, national and international level.

## **Research results were:**

- **Recruitment & training of five young experienced post docs**
- Establishment of a **research network** that allowed participating to other EU projects
- **Establishment of a state of the art** technology research platform in Molecular Microbial Ecology.
- **Publication** of research results.
- **Dissemination** to the civil society through different media.
- Establishing collaborations with SMEs :
- **One patent** was deposited.
- The Tunisian and Italian teams of BIODESERT were involved in **another EU project**.
- The Tunisian team established a **collaborative project with a US team**
- **The Tunisian team got the status of autonomous Research Unit** that could be directly funded by the Tunisian Ministry for Research

**Lessons learnt:** Thanks to the REGPOT, the European and world research can **now count on a high level laboratory in Tunisia in the field of Molecular Microbial Ecology**

# REGPOT: CASE 2 (RECENT - Poland)

February 2010 – January 2013

## Objectives:

1. Reinforce the research capacities
2. Implement new management techniques
3. Reinforce links with industry (in general SMEs)
4. Strengthen the links with the EU strategic partner institutions
5. Organization of scientific events: workshops, seminars, conferences, open days etc.
6. Improve the visibility of the institute
7. Infrastructure and environment (in the sector of clean energy resources)
8. Competitive economy
9. Reinforce the Human Capital

## Research results:

1. Large number of publications
2. Mobility and employment
3. Funded research
4. Conferences and Workshops: oriented to diffusion activities

## Lessons learnt :

1. Integration to international environment
2. Recruitment of Polish staff for longer periods
3. Invitations of external experts and difficulties to find candidates to spent longer time
4. Success in organization of international conferences and Workshops for industry

# FINAL CONCLUSIONS SUMMARY

- **What are the MOST COMMON weaknesses in the proposals you have evaluated? (REGPOT):**
  - LACK IN THE PROPOSAL THE SWOT ANALYSIS AND/OR THE ACTION PLAN
  - LACK OF BASIC SCIENTIFIC EQUIPMENT IN THE “EXCELLENCE” RESEARCH CENTRE
  - NOT JUSTIFIED SOME ADQUISITION OF SCIENTIFIC EQUIPMENT (PCs, BOATS...)
  - LACK OF EXCELLENCE IN THE TARGET SCIENTIFIC AREA
  - LACK OF SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATIONS (ONLY POSTERS OR SHORT PRESENTATIONS IN CONGRES, LOCAL PUBLICATIONS...)
  - VERY AMBICIOUS RESULTS PLANNED
  - FEW PhD IN FRONT OF THE NUMBER OF PhD STUDENTS OR MASTER DEGREE
  - LINKS WITH NOT HIGH LEVEL EU PARTNERS
  - NOT CLARITY IN THE OBJECTIVES: DIFFUSE DESCRIPTION (OR UNCLEAR)
  - NOT BALANCE BETWEEN GENDER PARTICIPANTS (e.g. 1 women/10men)
  - NOT REALISTIC BUDGET ACCORDING WITH THE TASKS OF THE PROPOSAL
  - VERY LARGE NUMBER OF WORKSHOPS (5-6 BY YEAR)
  - VERY EXPENSIVE PER-DIEM OR PLANE TICKETS (IN BUSINESS CLASS)
  - THE BUDGET WAS NOT WELL DEFINED
  - UNCLEAR PROJECT IMPACT
  - POOR DESCRIPTION OF THE MANAGEMENT PROJECT
  - PLANNED ACTIVITIES WITH NOT INTEREST FOR THE PROJECT

- Which are the lessons learned from REGPOT programme after its evaluation and impact analysis (I)

- Integration to international environment is the best strategy of development of staff qualification and research quality
- Recruitment of researchers staff for longer (of the order of one year) stays
- Opening new promising research directions of participating groups due to the intensified mobility of researchers
- More efficient dissemination of research results, research methodologies and techniques
- Reasonable financial conditions to allow stay with family are essential
- Invitations of external experts to the beneficiary centre are accepted provided the travel cost is covered



## Which are the lessons learned from REGPOT programme after its evaluation and impact analysis (II)

- It is difficult to find candidates to spent longer time (of the order of one month) among foreign researchers. This is true even in the case of junior staff
- Success in organization of international conferences depends to a great extent on the set of invited speakers
- Organization of short workshops for industry is a good way of initiating cooperation in research
- Dissemination activities requires a separate work package. Printed materials should be produced (books, posters, articles in journals...)
- Supporting regional development based on innovation and education activity generated by projects. ICTs play an important role in knowledge transfer and training

- What are the **exploitation & dissemination / communication channels** which would commonly improve the competitiveness of a proposal?

➤ PROJECT WEB PAGE

➤ PROJECT NEWS LETTERS (ONE OR TWO BY YEAR)

- DIFFUSION ACTIVITIES THROUGH THE LOCAL UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT

- EDITION OF BOOKS IN RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PROJECT RESULTS

- KICK OFF MEETING WITH MULTIMEDIA PRESENCE (TV, RADIO, JOURNALS...)

- ANNUAL PROJECT MEETINGS INCLUDING DIFFUSION ACTIVITIES

- THESIS OF MASTER OR PhD FOCUSED IN RESULTS OF THE PROJECT

➤ PATENTS IN COLLABORATION WITH SMEs

➤ CONGRESS PARTICIPATION WITH ORAL PRESENTATIONS / POSTERS

➤ SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATIONS IN HIGH LEVEL JOURNALS (CITATION INDEX)

- SEMINARS

➤ TRAINING COURSES INCLUDING ALL STAKEHOLDERS & POST GRADUATED STUDENTS

- MASTERS AS A DELIVERABLE INCLUDED IN ONE WP (EDUCATION - TRAINING)

➤ SEMINARS OPEN TO THE CIVIL SOCIETY

- SEMINARS FOR DIFFUSION OF PROJECT CONCLUSIONS

- SPECIFIC WORKSHOPS INCLUDED ON PROJECT DELIVERABLES / TASKS

- THEMATIC VIDEOS INCLUDING SURVEYS WITH STUDENTS PARTICIPATION

- PROJECT PRESENTATION IN LOCAL TV, NEWSPAPER, RADIO ETC...

**THANKS A LOT**

**And excuse me for my**

**Spanglish**